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Summary record of the 21st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 24 October 2011, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Zdorov (Vice-Chair) ..... (Belarus)

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Agenda item 24: Operational activities for development (*continued*)

(a) Operational activities for development of the United Nations system (*continued*)

(b) South-South cooperation for development (*continued*)

Agenda item 25: Agriculture development and food security (*continued*)

In the absence of Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Mr. Zdorov (Belarus), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 17: Macroeconomic policy questions (*continued*)

(b) International financial system and development (*continued*) (A/C.2/66/L.5 and L.7)

Draft resolution on the international financial system and development (A/C.2/66/L.5)

1. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.5 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Draft resolution on excessive international financial market speculation and extreme price volatility of food and related commodity markets (A/C.2/66/L.7)

2. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.7 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

(c) External debt sustainability and development (*continued*) (A/C.2/66/L.9)

Draft resolution on external debt sustainability and development (A/C.2/66/L.9)

3. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.9 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Agenda item 18: Follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2008 Review Conference (*continued*) (A/C.2/66/L.11)

Draft resolution on the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/C.2/66/L.11)

4. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.11 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Agenda item 21: Globalization and interdependence (*continued*) (A/C.2/66/L.13)

Draft resolution on culture and development (A/C.2/66/L.13)

5. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.13 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Agenda item 22: Groups of countries in special situations (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (*continued*) (A/C.2/66/L.8)

Draft resolution on the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (A/C.2/66/L.8)

6. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.8 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

(b) Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (*continued*) (A/C.2/66/L.14)

Draft resolution on specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (A/C.2/66/L.14)

7. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.14 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Agenda item 23: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (*continued*) (A/C.2/66/L.15)

Draft resolution on the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (A/C.2/66/L.15)

8. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.15 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

(b) Women in development (*continued*) (A/C.2/66/L.12)

Draft resolution on women in development (A/C.2/66/L.12)

9. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.12 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

(c) Human resources development (*continued*) (A/C.2/66/L.10)

Draft resolution on human resources in development (A/C.2/66/L.10)

10. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.10 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Agenda item 24: Operational activities for development (*continued*)

(a) Operational activities for development of the United Nations system (*continued*) (A/C.2/66/L.6)

Draft resolution on operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/C.2/66/L.6)

11. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.6 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

(b) South-South cooperation for development (*continued*) (A/C.2/66/L.2, L.3 and L.4)

Draft resolution on South-South cooperation (A/C.2/66/L.2)

12. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolutions A/C.2/66/L.2 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Draft resolution on the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South cooperation (A/C.2/66/L.3)

13. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.3 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Draft resolution on United Nations Day for South-South cooperation (A/C.2/66/L.4)

14. **Mr. Suárez Salvia** (Argentina) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/66/L.4 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Agenda item 25: Agriculture development and food security (*continued*) (A/66/76-E/2011/102 and A/66/277)

15. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the region had been hard hit by higher, more volatile food prices. Recognizing the need for a fundamental transformation of the agricultural sector, CARICOM had launched the Jagdeo Initiative which, in view of the strategic importance of agriculture in the region, set agricultural sector priorities aimed at boosting domestic consumption and cost-efficient production of food and moving into higher value niche markets. Its regional policy for food and Nutrition Security was designed to ensure safe and affordable food for consumers at all times.

16. He expressed the hope that CARICOM's partner nations and agencies would continue to provide the resources needed to build agriculturally critical infrastructure, carry out research and development and provide credit for smallholder farmers and recognized the efforts made by many global actors and groups, including the Group of 20 (G-20), to place global food security on a surer footing. He also welcomed the progress made in the reform of the Committee on World Food Security.

17. The region's agricultural development strategy was premised on achieving greater competitiveness and on the existence of a fair multilateral trading system for agricultural products; in other words, on bringing the Doha Development Round to a successful conclusion and eliminating the distortions in global agricultural markets. In view of rising food prices and increased food insecurity, the time had come to exploit the synergies between agricultural and economic development by mainstreaming agriculture and food security into development policies. With developing countries struggling to address food security and climate change at the same time, it was important for the international community to scale up its support for agricultural development.

18. **Mr. Khan** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that with food prices at an all-time high and extreme weather making crop yields less predictable, a concerted effort was vital to tackle the global problem of food security. Since 2009, the Association's food security policies had been guided by the ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework and Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security. Other related regional initiatives included the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve and the ASEAN Food Security Information System, which provided early warning information on the productivity of staple crops. ASEAN was committed to strengthening market mechanisms so as to bring small farmers into the global value chain and creating a well-functioning food market conducive to agricultural development in the developing countries. It therefore called for the earliest possible conclusion of the Doha Round.

19. Finally, he said that ASEAN applauded the active role of FAO in promoting rural development and food security in the ASEAN countries and looked forward to increased collaboration with it and other United Nations agencies on agriculture and food security.

20. **Mr. Latriche** (Observer for the European Union), noting that the world bore a collective responsibility to the hungry and undernourished, recalled that, in June, the G-20 had taken concrete action to address food price volatility by launching the Agricultural Market Information System and agreeing to eliminate export restrictions on food purchased for humanitarian purposes.

21. Sustainable agriculture development and land management could make farmers and communities more resilient and mitigate the effects of climate change. The European Union urged Member States to promote sustainable farming by supporting demand-led agricultural research and innovation. Its own international food security policy focused on improving the resilience of smallholder farmers, particularly women, and assisting vulnerable groups.

22. The European Union recognized the need for significant private investment in the agricultural sector in developing countries, but also for sound policies and an appropriate legal framework to ensure that such investment would foster broad-based growth, environmental sustainability and livelihood resilience. Accordingly, it welcomed the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on responsible governance of tenure of land, as well as the initiative by the World Bank, FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to develop a set of principles for responsible agro-investment.

23. Finally, recalling that the European Commission had recently signed a Strategic Framework of Cooperation with FAO, IFAD and the World Food Programme (WFP), he said that the European Union would continue to work for a comprehensive agreement in the Doha Development Round.

24. **Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation) said that there was a general consensus on the need for collective action in the short, medium and long term to address the global food crisis, at both national and international levels. In that connection, he endorsed the work being done by the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis.

25. Since the only way to solve the food security problem was by stepping up agricultural production, Russia was planning to develop and modernize its own agriculture, for it could become one of the world's key food suppliers. It was also participating more actively in international efforts to address the global food crisis by increasing its own food aid and contributing to agricultural development in developing countries. Over the biennium 2009-2011, Russia's contribution to the L'Aquila food security initiative would be 330 million dollars. In 2011, its annual contribution to the World Food Programme would amount to 20 million dollars, of which 5 million would go to Tajikistan, 5 million to

Kyrgyzstan, 5 million to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 2 million to the Palestinian Authority, and 1 million each to Guinea, Yemen and Kenya. Another 10 million dollars had been set aside for emergency assistance. Further humanitarian contributions were being planned for the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and northern Africa. In addition, under a pilot project for a network of school canteens, 8 million dollars of assistance would go to Armenia over a 3-year period. Through the International Civil Defence Organization (ICDO), humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan would amount to 2 million dollars, to Kyrgyzstan 5 million, and to Côte d'Ivoire 1 million.

26. It was important to modernize the operations of the international food and agriculture institutions in order to react as needed to fluctuations in world grain prices.

27. **Mr. Daoud** (Sudan) said that rising food prices were jeopardizing developing countries' efforts to achieve food security. The international community should assist them and help them gain better access to world markets for their products and services.

28. The Sudan, for its part, had adopted a national agricultural strategy consisting of a "Green Mobilization" campaign, which was expected to yield positive results inter alia in the trade and transport sectors. It was also seeking to join the World Trade Organization, thus far without success, although it had met the criteria for membership.

29. The adverse impact of climate change on agricultural development called for application of the Rio principle of the common but differentiated responsibilities. Developed States should fulfil their commitments to the developing States in the matter of capacity-building and financial and technical support, especially in the agriculture sector, with a view to establishing an international trade regime based on partnership, justice and sustainable development.

30. **Ms. Masot Planas** (Cuba), after expressing solidarity with the countries of the Horn of Africa in their struggle against climate change-induced famine and drought, said that, in discussing agriculture development and food security issues, the Committee should not duplicate or seek to replace the work of FAO. The reformed Committee on World Food Security of FAO must remain the primary forum for such discussions.

31. In its report, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World* 2011, FAO indicated that high and volatile food prices were expected to continue and called for forceful action to banish food insecurity from the planet. However, as long as transnational agribusiness controlled such things as food prices, technologies and distribution channels that would not be possible. It would be helpful if the countries that had pledged to contribute 0.7 per cent of their GDP to official development assistance (ODA) stood by their promise and also designated part of that ODA to support agricultural production in developing countries. Moreover, the production and consumption patterns of the developed world were environmentally destructive and should be replaced with sustainable ways of life.

32. Cuba had already achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and was cooperating with other developing countries, in accordance with the principles of solidarity and mutual assistance.

33. Finally, noting that the long-standing cruel embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba was the main obstacle to the full enjoyment by Cubans of the inalienable right to food, she called for immediate action to eradicate hunger from the face of the Earth.

34. **Mr. Sammis** (United States of America) said that, according to World Bank estimates, rising food prices had pushed some 50 million people into poverty since June 2010. The United States remained determined to follow through on its pledge, made in 2009, to provide $3.5 billion to combat hunger over the next three years, and it urged all partners to honour their commitments as well. It was the largest donor of assistance to the Horn of Africa, where a massive international response was under way despite interference from Al-Shabaab and it was also supporting long-term food security in the region through its Feed the Future initiative, which emphasized broad-based economic growth as the foundation for sustainable development. It would be working with other donors in the region to increase overall agricultural production.

35. The United States strongly supported the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme. As a partner in the Scaling Up Nutrition movement, it was pleased to have participated in the recent high-level meeting on nutrition, which had focused on the progress made during the movement's first year.

36. WFP, IFAD and FAO should focus on cost savings to give donors best value for their money given the difficult economy. The newly reformed Committee on World Food Security (CFS) had the potential to become the foremost intergovernmental platform for stakeholders to work together in support of country-led processes towards the elimination of hunger. However, to be successful, CFS must provide a forum for real cooperation among FAO, IFAD, WFP and other related United Nations agencies. The United States looked forward to the outcome of the CFS-led discussions on voluntary guidelines on responsible governance of tenure of land.

37. Finally, he said that the world could not afford to marginalize women farmers. The United States had recently allocated $5 million for a new Feed the Future gender programme, that would, inter alia, promote gender integration into agricultural development and food security programming.

38. **Mr. Hashim** (Saudi Arabia) said that, conscious of the need for international cooperation to deal with the food crisis, Saudi Arabia had donated $500 million to the World Food Programme and was continuing to provide development assistance to developing and least developed countries (LDCs). It was also developing trade and consumption policies to ensure adequate food supplies, promoting sustainable development in the agriculture sector through the optimal use of natural resources, especially water, and encouraging the private sector to invest in countries with high agricultural potential.

39. **Mr. Khalil** (Egypt) said that the international community needed to act immediately given the likelihood of a continued steep rise in food prices and the possibility of a continuing global food crisis due to climate change.

40. The multiple and complex causes of the food crisis required a coordinated international response. The international community must scale up investment in agriculture as a means both of increasing food production and of driving economic growth to support climate change adaption and mitigation. Developing countries would need technical and financial assistance to enhance the productivity and resilience of their agriculture in the face of crises. Stable and effective policies, regulatory mechanisms and functional market infrastructures that promoted investment in the agricultural sector were therefore of paramount importance.

41. **Mr. Diallo** (Senegal) said that, with billions of people still suffering from hunger and undernutrition after decades of efforts to achieve food security, it was essential to explore new alternatives. In April 2011, Senegal had organized the second Dakar International Agriculture Forum. The latter's recommendations included improving agricultural production in developing countries through applied research and enhanced international cooperation between public and private institutions, as well as promoting agricultural enterprises by means of ambitious training strategies and appropriate financing. In that connection, he invited the international community to increase its assistance to agriculture, encourage foreign direct investment by the private sector and explore the possibility of allocating a significant portion of the additional resources generated by innovative financing mechanisms to agriculture and rural development.

42. The recommendations also called, inter alia, for regulatory policies and for actions to improve soil structure, water quality and input availability. Lastly, because the world's food security governance mechanisms appeared increasingly inadequate, the forum had recommended the establishment of a global institution for agriculture and food governance.

43. Food security was a national development priority in Senegal. Its strategy, based on agricultural modernization, sustainable land management and the promotion of individual farm sectors, had given rise to many initiatives, including most recently the unionization of agricultural producers and the establishment of a rural "green bank". Its national agricultural insurance company provided an effective risk management mechanism.

44. **Mr. Laguna** (Mexico) called for concerted action to mitigate the impact of the global food crisis. The international community should work together to prevent future crises by reviewing fund allocation mechanisms, boosting food production and eliminating speculation in commodity markets, where 30 per cent of maize and wheat was now traded by financial enterprises.

45. Mexico had recently pledged $1 million for World Food Programme operations in the Horn of Africa. It agreed with the Group of 77 and China on the need for an open-ended working group to discuss

ways of reducing price volatility and speculation in commodity markets and it considered the conclusion of the Doha Round indispensable for moving forward on market integration and opening new fields of international agricultural commerce.

46. At the domestic level, Mexico had launched a programme to boost the production of staple crops by modernizing traditional farm practices. It would be happy to share the results of that and other experiments with interested Governments.

47. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh) said that the economic and financial crisis and the food crisis were having devastating effects on developing countries, particularly LDCs. Those countries' plight was primarily due to incoherent international policies and to an environment in which development was seen from a purely commercial point of view and developed markets were protected by trade barriers.

48. It was time to fulfil the universal right to food by increasing efforts at all levels to make food security and agriculture development an integral part of the international development agenda. Increasing food production would require greater financial support and investment, particularly in LDCs. It would also require technical assistance including access to and transfer of technology. Developed countries should supply technology and high-yielding variety seeds on affordable, concessional terms. Moreover, farmers in developing countries must be given better access to global markets. Accordingly, his delegation called for an early conclusion of the Doha Round, and for the elimination of discriminatory subsidies.

49. Goal 1 of the MDGs, eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, depended on the achievement Goal 8, a global partnership for development. Of all of the MDGs, Goal 8 was the only one with non-quantified targets. Had the international community been able to quantify the targets, most of the world's development problems would already have been solved.

50. **Ms. Chen** Yingzhu (China) said food security was crucial not only for the development and well-being of individual countries but also for global development and security. Accordingly, countries should invest more in agriculture, raise the scientific and technological levels of farming and promote food production in order to enhance the food production capacities of the developing countries.

51. Developed countries should move the Doha Round forward, show flexibility on agricultural subsidies and trade barriers, rein in commodity market speculation and strengthen the regulation of international capital flows and the financial derivatives market. They should also implement the L'Aquila declaration and other development assistance commitments and honour their international obligations. The developing countries for their part should strengthen South-South cooperation.

52. China supported the discussion of agriculture and food security as an important part of the green economy at the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

53. Finally, he said that China attached great importance to agriculture. At home, it had achieved food security by relying on domestic production and improving productivity. Abroad, it was helping countries — particularly in Africa — develop agriculture and food production and had recently provided more than RMB 443.3 million in food assistance for the Horn of Africa. It stood willing to join hands with the international community to safeguard global food security and promote the timely realization of the MDGs.

54. **Ms. Esposito Guevara** (Bolivia) called for urgent action to address the famine in the Horn of Africa. To strengthen sustainable agriculture and food production in the developing countries, small- and medium-scale farmers needed equitable access to land, water, seeds and affordable credit, and financial institutions should be encouraged to provide more loans to finance local crop diversification. Developed countries must eliminate protectionist measures, as well as the food subsidies that had made developing countries net food importers over the past 20 years. However, the poorest countries should be allowed to shelter local agriculture in order to ensure food security. Food distribution mechanisms should be made more equitable by encouraging the development of public enterprises for food production, distribution and marketing.

55. **Mr. Bay** (Singapore) said that Singapore strongly supported multilateral initiatives such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Action Plan on Food Security and the Niigata declaration on APEC food security. In that connection, he drew attention to document A/65/832, which presented the views that the

Global Governance Group would share at the G-20 summit the following week.

56. The global food market was inherently volatile, but more so when countries implemented trade-restrictive policies. An open and equitable multilateral trading system was essential for long-term food security; thus a successful conclusion of the Doha Round would greatly help to reduce volatility.

57. Singapore imported more than 90 per cent of its food. To minimize its exposure to price volatility, it had diversified its imports and had encouraged Singaporean firms to explore contract farming and joint ventures overseas. It was also encouraging local farming and supporting research and development aimed at improving local productivity.

58. Singaporean universities and research laboratories were collaborating with the International Rice Research Institute to improve rice yields and disease resistance. As a research and development hub, Singapore was leveraging private-sector efforts and supporting agribusinesses attempting to apply genomics to agriculture.

59. In closing, he called on countries, Governments, academia and the private sector to join forces to bring about a new green revolution.

60. **Mr. Jiménez** (Nicaragua) reiterated that the food crisis was the result of the global economic order and of economic policies that discouraged sustainable agriculture. Nicaraguan policies aimed to ensure both food security and food sovereignty. Thanks to its embrace of microcredit, Nicaragua had already attained Goal 1 of the MDGs.

61. Through microcredit programmes that emphasized the empowerment of women, it was promoting a revolutionary concept: the possibility of throwing off the oligarchic neoliberal model by empowering the deprived and strengthening small-scale farming. To ensure food security, the Government sold food at fair prices in 90 per cent of the country. Far from instituting a welfare State, Nicaragua was giving the poorest the tools they needed to grow food and get along on their own. None of the programmes would have been possible without the financing mechanisms of the Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América.

62. The requirements of the programmes themselves, together with sales in the local market, had given a substantial boost to the national economy. However, all of Nicaragua's efforts were being threatened by the effects of climate change.

63. **Ms. Prorok** (Ukraine) said that her country was in favour of closer cooperation between FAO, IFAD, WFP and international financial institutions. It supported the United Nations Comprehensive Framework for Action on the global food crisis and welcomed the contributions of the G-8 and the G-20.

64. To improve food security and stabilize grain prices, her delegation proposed the creation of a world grain reserve to be operated by FAO and funded by international financial institutions. As one of the world's major grain producers, Ukraine would contribute significant stores.

65. Given the importance of agriculture development to development as a whole, it was essential to address that topic in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, as well as to improve implementation of the decisions of the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

66. Ukraine was strongly committed to achieving Goal 1 of the MDGs and would continue working to mitigate the world food crisis. It had recently pledged to provide humanitarian assistance to the countries in the Horn of Africa.

67. **Mr. Singh** (India) said that food security was not a function of aggregate population; even with their larger population, the developing countries consumed less food than the developed countries.

68. In India, 70 per cent of the population was dependent on agriculture, and most farmers practised dryland farming. India's comprehensive strategy for food security and agriculture development addressed the issues of improving economic viability, promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, empowering small and marginal farmers and adopting appropriate price and trade policy mechanisms.

69. India welcomed the steps being taken by the G-20 to strengthen the coordination of food security policy and called for increased investment, greater use of modern technology and greater access to farm credit as a means of increasing agricultural productivity. Those in favour of liberalizing trade in agricultural products must accept adequate safeguards to protect agriculture, food security and livelihoods in developing countries.

70. India was committed to providing technical assistance to its fellow developing countries. At the recent India-Africa Forum Summit, it had announced several initiatives to improve food security in Africa.

71. **Mr. Madani** (Afghanistan) said that his Government had made agriculture its number one development priority. The national development strategy included policies to establish land tenure security, improve the rural transportation and irrigation infrastructure and provide access to drought-resistant crop varieties. With financial support from the United States, the Government had already established a farm credit fund.

72. All States should take immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, food security and agriculture development should be given due attention at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

73. Finally, he said that with 12 million Afghans facing hunger as a result of the worst drought since 2001, his Government had had to appeal for an additional $142 million in disaster assistance earlier that month. While humbly urging delegations to stand in solidarity with the people of Afghanistan, he thanked FAO, WFP and its other partners for their continued support.

74. **Mr. Souissi** (Morocco), noting that the share of official development assistance allocated to agriculture had fallen from 15 per cent to less than 5 per cent, said that it was imperative to invest massively in global agricultural production. It was also necessary to: (a) redirect investment to the farm sector; (b) regulate international markets with a view to improving wealth distribution; (c) keep track of world food inventories in order to prevent speculation and improve the coordination of global agricultural policy; (d) regulate private agricultural markets; (e) establish food distribution networks in conjunction with WFP; and (f) limit export restrictions and allow developing countries autonomy over food production.

75. In recognition of the interconnectedness of environmental protection and food security, Morocco had developed a "green plan" to address the problem of increasingly scarce water resources. It was also strengthening its national reforestation, soil erosion and reservoir protection programmes.

76. The global food crisis called for immediate cooperation between the relevant international organizations and other broad-based or regional groups; the recently initiated dialogue between the G-20 and the United Nations was one such example. In order to ensure better global allocation of food resources it would be useful to reproduce, at the regional level and in coordination with the African economic organizations, the efforts of the international community, by having developing countries make use of their storage capacity in order to prevent price volatility and speculation in food products.

77. In Africa, the food crisis had reached dramatic proportions; urgent assistance was needed not only in Somalia but also, to a lesser extent, in the countries of the Sahel. Elsewhere on the continent, regional cooperation such as the Nile Basin Initiative, undertaken jointly with the New Partnership for Africa's Development, was helping to boost agriculture development.

78. Morocco would continue to fight food insecurity by sharing its agricultural know-how and experience with developing countries, particularly in Africa.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

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Summary record of the 22nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 25 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Denis Zdorov (Vice-Chair) ..... (Belarus)

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Agenda item 25: Agriculture development and food security (*continued*)

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In the absence of Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Mr. Zdorov (Belarus), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 25: Agriculture development and food security (*continued*) (A/66/76-E/2011/102 and A/66/277)

1. **Mr. Radian** (Israel) said that climate change, drought and desertification and other challenges underscored the need to replace traditional farming methods with sustainable agricultural systems. Israel, a small country in an arid zone, had to develop sustainable agricultural methods in order to conserve and maintain its resources. In just over 60 years it had transformed a competitive disadvantage into an asset to become a world leader in agricultural innovation and technology. It had continued to develop cutting-edge technologies in both the water and renewable energy sectors, and had introduced sophisticated systems for drip irrigation, seawater desalination and water reclamation. Its appreciation of the need for energy independence had likewise stimulated groundbreaking advances in the fields of photovoltaic technology and geothermal energy.

2. Having undergone rapid and successful agricultural development Israel was eager to play a prominent role in international efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger around the world. Because urban-dwellers now comprised half of the world's population and depended on the rural population for sustenance, his Government's agricultural assistance programming abroad focused on promoting sustainability of agricultural production in rural areas of the developing world.

3. In partnership with Ghana and Germany, Israel was working to raise the efficiency of Ghanaian citrus farmers by combining agricultural assistance with capacity-building and elements of microfinancing and microcredit. Another successful project, the Techno-agricultural Innovation for Poverty Alleviation (TIPA) programme which relied on low-cost drip irrigation techniques that allowed farmers to produce crops throughout the year, had been introduced in a number of African countries. Initiatives such as TIPA highlighted the importance of sharing agricultural technology to promote sustainable development; the programme would be the focus of the resolution on agricultural technology for development his delegation would be submitting shortly to the Committee.

4. However, it was not enough to assist developing countries to acquire new technologies; they must develop their own capabilities for innovation. Accordingly, the focus should be on capacity-building, education and transfer of skills.

5. To that end, his Government was currently co-hosting a High-Level Expert Group Meeting on "using green agriculture to stimulate economic growth and eradicate poverty" in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012. It remained committed to the principle of sharing its experience and know-how with others in order to identify the most efficient approaches to ensuring food security and developing sustainable agriculture.

6. **Ms. Chartres** (Australia) said that the drought in the Horn of Africa and the flooding in South-east Asia and Pakistan were reminders of the tragic toll extreme weather events and climate change could exact on people's lives. Meanwhile, the surge in some commodity food prices might well result in another global food crisis. Feeding the world's population of 9 billion by 2050 would require an estimated 70 per cent increase in global food production. According to a World Bank report agricultural production was four times more effective than other sectors at reducing poverty, making the rationale for increased investments in agriculture clear.

7. Addressing the obstacles — such as poor market infrastructure and unfair competition — that stood in the way of progress for many developing countries would increase the opportunities for developing country farmers to raise food output.

8. An open trading system, undistorted by artificial subsidies and market barriers, would allow farmers to make the best decisions about how to invest and to specialize in those products in which they had a competitive advantage. It would also allow countries with inadequate agricultural resources but other comparative advantages to realize the goal of food security through trade.

9. Australia advocated a comprehensive approach to the issue of global food security, including through emergency assistance and social protection for the most vulnerable, aid for agriculture and rural development, public and private investments in

agricultural research and development, investment in climate change mitigation and appropriate economic and trade policies at the global, regional and national levels.

10. Her country's aid programme, which would double in size by 2015, included a strong and growing focus on agriculture and food security, with extensive funding dedicated to the World Food Programme (WFP), the Global Food Crisis Response Programme (GFRP), the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

11. The impact of that development assistance had been dramatic, with increased crop yields in countries such as Timor-Leste, Afghanistan and the Solomon Islands. Australia had joined with other Group of 20 (G-20) Ministers of Agriculture, to adopt the Action Plan on Price Volatility and Agriculture and establish a new Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS). It was committed to sharing its expertise with others in order to improve the agricultural sector's resilience to droughts and floods, as well as to upgrade water management practices and introduce conservation-oriented farming methods.

12. **Ms. Wacharaprapapong** (Thailand) said that while the agricultural sector employed 40 per cent of Thailand's population, farmers comprised the majority of the country's rural poor. As a result agricultural development was crucial not only to the goal of enhancing food security and raising agricultural productivity but also to that of reducing poverty.

13. Her Government believed that the issue of agricultural development should be addressed in a holistic manner by promoting productive investments in agriculture that respected the lives and livelihoods of local communities and yielded mutual benefits for investors and local populations alike. Improving agricultural productivity would require intensified research and development efforts that remained mindful of biodiversity and its contribution to sustainable agricultural practices.

14. In that regard the transfer of technology to developing countries was fundamental to agricultural development and to the mitigation of and adaptation to the impacts of climate change. Improvements in food processing technologies that provided small farmers with added value and linked them to the global value chain were equally vital.

15. Food security should be addressed from the perspectives of both supply and demand, with a free, fair and open international market serving as the necessary precondition for guaranteed food accessibility. Her country looked forward to the early conclusion of the Doha Round in order to ensure a fair agricultural market and it called for international solidarity on the issue.

16. Climate change presented a real threat to food security. The worst flooding the country had experienced in decades was currently impacting crucial sectors of the economy, including the agricultural sector. While it was important to focus on the immediate problems, his Government recognized the need for long-term solutions, including the development of improved water management and irrigation systems and the establishment of an early warning mechanism to enable it to better predict and prepare for natural disasters.

17. The global nature of the food security challenge called for a well-coordinated response at the subregional, regional and international levels. Her Government expressed its appreciation to the United Nations system in general and to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in particular for championing agricultural development and food security. It looked forward to working with other Member States to promote agricultural development and food security.

18. **Mr. De Klerk** (Netherlands) said that the ongoing situation in the Horn of Africa had been a stark reminder that, despite greater prosperity for a large number of people, hunger had not been eradicated. By 2050 there would be 9 billion people to feed, requiring a 70 per cent increase in food production while the availability of arable land would increase by only 15 per cent.

19. Food security was not merely a question of increasing production but also of ensuring that people had the necessary resources to purchase enough food of adequate quality. With a growing number of people in the developing world living in cities it was vital that adequate markets and infrastructures be developed to link production with consumption.

20. On the production side, the private sector had to play a central role, with the emphasis on improving business environments in rural areas, promoting entrepreneurship and creating jobs. Farmers were

entrepreneurs; and, as such, they needed access to financial services, training and advice. Towards that end, his Government would invest 200 million euros in the GAFSP, the Dutch development bank FMO, the cooperative bank Rabobank and others.

21. In many countries food security was hampered by poor infrastructure, with up to 30 per cent of crops in Africa being lost post-harvest. To ameliorate the situation initiatives such as the Trademark East Africa had been established to promote cross-border trade. Food security was a central component of his Government's development policies; as the world's second-largest exporter of agricultural products, the Netherlands could provide a valuable perspective on the challenges of food security and on potential solutions.

22. **Mr. Dingha** (Democratic Republic of Congo) said that the situation in the Horn of Africa and, most notably, the tragedy unfolding in Somalia, underscored the need to integrate the issues of agricultural development and food security into sustainable development efforts.

23. His delegation welcomed the measures taken to increase financing of agriculture and food security, such as the establishment of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and the launch of the GAFSP, noting that 12 countries had so far benefited from subsidies totaling $520.2 million.

24. His Government had made agriculture a national priority; it believed that — as noted, inter alia, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — everyone had the right to adequate food and that the gravity of the ongoing crisis necessitated greater international coordination of initiatives at all levels.

25. Having at its disposal arable land, a favourable climate and abundant water resources his Government had taken measures aimed at achieving food security in accordance with the commitments made at the African Union Summit in Maputo. Among them was an experimental project to reverse rural flight by establishing agricultural villages and creating an agro-industrial network with the aim of fostering food independence. It had launched an initiative to mechanize agriculture and refurbish rural roads as a means of facilitating access to markets and increase the incomes of rural populations. It had also promoted livestock rearing in certain regions and put in place a satellite monitoring system to assist fishing vessels to increase their catches. It was seeking, above all, to deal with the structural causes of the food crisis, notably the inadequate investment in rural development.

26. **Ms. Anderson** (Ireland), noting that some 12 million people were suffering from acute hunger in the Horn of Africa, said that her country had responded with immediate relief and direct assistance. However, short-term relief must be part of a longer-term strategy focused on sustainable agriculture and food security.

27. As a result of the 2008 Hunger Task Force report, her Government was now focusing on boosting the productivity of agricultural smallholders in sub-Saharan Africa, especially of women, targeting malnutrition in infants, children and mothers and promoting governance and leadership to reduce global hunger at both the national and international levels. The Task Force had also recommended that 20 per cent of the national aid budget be allocated to hunger-related activities by 2012. That goal would soon be achieved.

28. Smallholder farmers, especially women, must be at the heart of any sustainable solution to global hunger. Support would be most effective if the entire food production cycle was considered as part of the value chain process. Support for agricultural research and improved access to credit and farm inputs should be central features of any aid programme. Likewise smallholder farmers should have links with the private sector.

29. At the same time stressing that increased production did not necessarily translate into improved nutritional outcomes, she said that quality as much as quantity should be the relevant measure. Comprehensive initiatives such as the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement had real potential to reduce malnutrition.

30. The recent High-Level Meeting on Nutrition had taken stock of the substantial progress the SUN movement had made in the year since it was launched. Ireland had been a leading donor convenor for the SUN movement in Tanzania and Malawi and was supporting SUN processes in Ethiopia, Zambia and Uganda and it encouraged all stakeholders to ensure that nutrition security was universally applied.

31. **Mr. Bame** (Ethiopia), noting that at no time in history had so many people faced the prospect of food insecurity, said that Ethiopia had suffered for decades from cyclical droughts and food insecurity.

32. Since agriculture was the mainstay of 85 per cent of the population, it had been recognized from the outset that the structural problems inherent in the agricultural sector must be tackled. Accordingly, the Government had placed subsistence farmers at the centre of all development strategies, had undertaken massive water and soil conservation programmes and had introduced improved agricultural techniques. As a result Ethiopia was now one of the five fastest growing economies in the world.

33. Given its abundant water resources, temperate climate and vast areas of untapped agricultural farmland, there was no reason why Ethiopia should suffer from food insecurity. Provided that it could develop appropriate policies, build strong partnerships and create an enabling environment for private investors, it should be able to achieve the goal of sustainable agricultural development. In that regard his Government had proclaimed itself ready to collaborate with the private sector. While some had expressed concern that private foreign investors could displace local communities, his Government wished to reassure its international partners and non-governmental organizations that it would act responsibly. Only a fraction of the arable land would be made available to investors, the land would not be inhabited and it would be provided to them only with the consent of local communities.

34. While it was true that Governments were ultimately responsible for food security at the country level, they required supplementary support from the international community. His delegation therefore urged the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis to redouble its efforts, through the updated Comprehensive Framework for Action, to better contribute to the twin-track approach in both the short term and the long term and called on its development partners to continue their efforts to fulfil all their commitments, particularly those outlined in the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative.

35. **Ms. Haynes** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that ensuring food security was a multifaceted challenge that required appropriate policy responses and investments at the regional, national and international levels.

36. As a designated net food importing developing country (NFIDC), Trinidad and Tobago was highly vulnerable to external shocks in international agricultural markets. That dependency on food imports was compounded by low food production capacity and the fact that even locally produced food commodities were dependent to a large extent on raw and semi-processed imported inputs.

37. Her Government had begun to address the challenge of food insecurity by collaborating with international and regional agencies such as FAO, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI). It had developed a National Food and Nutrition Security Policy that included a special focus on the involvement of women in agriculture and smallholder farming, was facilitating access to credit through the Agricultural Development Bank and was conducting applied research studies on priority commodities in accordance with the National Agricultural Sector Reform Programme (ASRP).

38. The global food crisis demonstrated action at the international, national and regional levels. Despite many short-term successes the international community had not lived up to its obligations with regard to the issue of global food security. The role of the multilateral system in assisting Member States to focus and coordinate their efforts to achieve food security could not be overestimated. Her Government therefore reiterated its commitment to the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action and the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and called for a successful conclusion of the Doha Round.

39. A key institution in the coordination of the global approach to food security was the Committee on World Food Security, which had been reformed with the aim of creating the most inclusive international and multi-stakeholder platform for cooperation in ensuring food security and nutrition for all. Her country looked forward to the continued implementation of proposals for the Committee's reform, particularly in relation to strengthened linkages between its constituencies at the local, regional and national levels.

40. **Mr. Dabire** (Burkina Faso) noting that his country suffered inter alia from insufficient and uneven rainfall and population pressure, said that, in recent years, farmers had been receiving direct support from the Government in the form of subsidies for agricultural inputs and distribution of improved seeds. The change to a more industrial type of farming and

the promotion of the marketing of agricultural produce, in particular with the establishment of a genuine partnership between agricultural producers and the various processing industries, needed to be advanced. Additionally, measures must be taken to facilitate access between the growing areas and the marketing areas and to improve processing of agricultural products in order to lengthen their shelf life and increase their value added.

41. **Ms. Morizet** (France) said that ensuring food security would require close cooperation by all actors concerned, with the international organizations having an important role to play in the areas of forecasting, analysis and early warning.

42. France welcomed the first two reports of the High-Level Panel of Experts within the Committee on Food Security, dealing with legal issues to do with land ownership and international investment in agriculture, and with price volatility of agricultural and food products. The mandate of the High-Level Task Force must be renewed in the interests of improving coordination and synergies.

43. The signatories to the L'Aquila declaration in 2009 had decided to devote $22 billion, over three years, to the issue of food security. France's commitment amounted to 1,551 million euros. Food security and price volatility were priority themes for the French presidency of the Group of 20 (G-20). Cooperation and coordination between the Group and the agencies of the United Nations system was crucial to the definition of collective and sustainable solutions.

44. The initiatives launched by the G-20 included the establishment of the Agricultural Market Information System and the Rapid Response Forum, a pilot project on emergency humanitarian food reserves, to be undertaken by ECOWAS, and the launching of a platform on tropical agriculture.

45. Food security must remain high on the list of priorities of the United Nations. The General Assembly should take steps at the current session to establish a new global governance of agricultural development, food security and nutrition, in conjunction with the work of the Committee on Food Security and the G-20.

46. **Ms. Aung** (Myanmar), noting that major causes of the global food crisis included price speculation, a surge in biofuel production, climate change, low levels of investment in agriculture, trade distortions and a lack of social safety nets, said that the short-term solution to the problem should include emergency food aid and financial response to the food and nutrition security needs in vulnerable countries. A long-term solution would require a comprehensive approach encompassing all the factors adversely affecting agricultural production.

47. One major lesson learned from the crisis was the need for greater investment in the agriculture sector. Greater financial and technical assistance must be given to developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, to boost agricultural production. The international community should enhance its support for the promotion of integrated and sustainable agriculture as well as for rural development and poverty alleviation in developing countries.

48. Myanmar was concentrating on boosting its agricultural production. With abundant arable land, water and a favourable climate, the country had great potential for expanding agricultural production. The emphasis was on ensuring self-sufficiency in rice, expanding the cultivation of pulses for export and increasing production of cotton and sugar cane. Private entrepreneurs and companies had been encouraged to reclaim fallow lands, virgin lands and wetlands for agricultural production.

49. The international community should use the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to develop a comprehensive approach to global food security. While it was each State's primary responsibility to ensure food security for its people, efficient global action and assistance would play an important role in achieving the Millennium Development Goal objective of halving the number of the world's hungry.

50. **Mr. Loh** (Malaysia) described measures being taken by his Government to ensure food security in the country. He suggested that efforts to boost the agriculture sector must involve the younger generation, and must involve improved management through cost-effective and environmentally friendly technologies.

51. **Mr. Lobry-Boulanger** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) reported that the Federation had focused its 2011 World Disasters Report on hunger and malnutrition. Even when it did not reach famine levels, chronic hunger had a devastating effect: every year, millions of children died

because of a lack of adequate nutritious food, with millions more suffering stunted growth.

52. To address the problem it would be necessary to improve agricultural practices and marketing mechanisms. In addition, more global action was needed to tackle related issues, such as poverty and inequality, population pressure, climate change and land degradation and desertification. Urgent action was also needed to stem the continuing rise in food prices caused by commodity speculation and rising fuel prices.

53. At the same time, more could be done to empower people to identify their development priorities and diversify livelihood options. Smallholder farming provided one solution for struggling pastoralist communities and should be expanded. By means of "sustainable intensification", in the sense of scaling up innovations that increased productivity without destroying the resource base on which it depended, Governments and donors alike should promote the participation of local farmers and acknowledge their wisdom and experience. More than half of those suffering hunger were women, many of them small-scale farmers themselves. According to recent research productivity on farms would increase by 20 to 30 per cent if gender discrimination were to be eliminated.

54. Disaster risk reduction measures were an essential element of communities' resilience. In responding to heightened emergencies, donors must be encouraged to look at investing to prevent the next disaster, through supporting enhanced planning and accountability, investments in infrastructure improvements, and in social services.

55. **Ms. Ratsifandrihamanana** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) observed that high and volatile food prices were likely to continue due, inter alia, to growing demand for biofuels, dwindling natural resources, deteriorating soil quality and high dependence on fossil energy sources, pesticides and fertilizers. To achieve food security targets, agricultural production would have to increase by 70 per cent globally and by 100 per cent in developing countries. That would require increased investment in agriculture, including innovative financing and initiatives that targeted smallholder farmers.

56. It was time for a new paradigm that would incorporate the agriculture, forestry, fishery and food sectors in a sustainable manner. To achieve that new paradigm, FAO had developed the concept of "greening the economy with agriculture", which referred to increasing food security while using fewer natural resources, by way of improved efficiencies throughout the food value chain. It was hoped that the "greening" approach would contribute to the policies and decisions that would emerge from the 2012 Conference on Sustainable Development. All dimensions of food security must be addressed, in a comprehensive and multisectoral engagement that also incorporated cross-cutting issues such as gender equity. Central to that approach was the role of smallholders, especially women, who should be seen as critical agents of change in agriculture and food security.

57. Finally, she called on Member States to support the decision of the FAO Conference to establish the International Year of Quinoa in 2013 and the International Year of Family Farming in 2014.

58. **Mr. Medrano** (World Food Programme (WFP)) observed that three years after the onset of the food and financial crises, food prices were still historically high. Under these circumstances, investment in social protection was critical in order to avert disasters. Nutrition safety nets — such as school meals — sustained livelihoods and prevented those affected from adopting negative coping strategies. For example, despite indescribable hardship all around them, 4.5 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya and northern Uganda who had had safety nets in place had not needed emergency aid, and had not been displaced.

59. Such social protection measures could be complemented by the development of emergency food reserve systems for vulnerable countries or regions. The World Food Programme was developing a pilot project for a regional emergency humanitarian food reserves system, as a complement to other measures for mitigation and improved management of risks associated with food price volatility.

60. Reform of the Committee on World Food Security was resulting in increased collaboration among the Rome-based agencies including through transition from relief to recovery, information systems for food and nutrition security, and partnership on weather index insurance tools. The key factor was to concentrate on solutions that worked.

61. **Ms. von Lilien** (International Fund for Agricultural Development) observed that the

international community seemed to be falling behind in its efforts to achieve the goal of reducing hunger and poverty. That was due, at least in part, to nearly three decades of declining support for agriculture. Since the food price crisis, however, there had been renewed commitment to agriculture by donor countries and international financial institutions, as well as increased funding from emerging economies and domestic resource mobilization in developing countries.

62. While those were promising signs, the challenges remained enormous. Some 70 per cent of the world's poorest people lived in the rural areas of developing countries. By improving their ability to feed themselves, they could also improve their ability to feed others, generate income, and create new jobs. However, to become more productive, they needed access to productive resources, finance, technology and support in managing the many risks they faced. Organization was key: through stronger producer organizations, poor rural people could act as partners in development. Agriculture must be a viable and rewarding lifestyle for those who chose it. The forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would offer opportunities to recognize smallholder farmers as the strategic entry points for action on global food security and poverty reduction and place the men and women who grew the world's food at the centre of an inclusive, equitable and sustainable development framework of the future. The time to act is now.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

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Second Committee

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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 26 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Donckel (Vice-Chair) ..... (Luxembourg)

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In the absence of Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Mr. Donckel (Luxembourg) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 61: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (A/66/78-E/2011/13)

1. **Ms. Khalaf** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), introducing document A/66/78-E/2011/13 and accompanying her statement with a slide presentation, described the plight of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory using detailed statistics. She referred to the deaths, injuries, arbitrary arrests, detentions, population displacement and property destruction and confiscation inflicted by Israel, the occupying Power; the Israeli settlements, settler violence, mobility restrictions, closure policies, and exploitation, endangerment and depletion of Palestinian natural resources and the environment; the traumatic conditions created in the Gaza Strip by the Israeli blockade; and the dire situation of the Palestinian economy and social sectors. In occupied Syrian Golan, Israel pursued de facto annexation policies and discriminated against the Syrian Arab citizens in the areas of employment, irrigation and taxation. She urged the international community to end the Israeli occupation and restore the inalienable rights of the population concerned.

2. **Mr. Aloumi** (Kuwait) expressed the hope that the Second Committee would give due consideration to the information provided in the introductory statement.

3. **Mr. Khalil** (Egypt) said that, within its area of responsibility, the Second Committee should formulate new recommendations on how to end the suffering of the Arab population whose plight had been described.

4. **Mr. AlHantouli** (Observer for Palestine) said that the Israeli occupation prevented international aid from helping the Palestinian people to achieve its development goals and safeguard its resources; and asked the Under-Secretary-General how the United Nations and the Member States could use the information that she had provided in order to take responsible action to put an end to that occupation.

5. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic), noting that Israel had prevented Second Committee representatives from entering the occupied territory, asked how ESCWA could provide the Arab peoples living under occupation with new means of communication in order to enable them to report on the economic, social and humanitarian problems that they faced. He further suggested that reports by ESCWA should be included in the monthly briefing submitted by the Secretariat to the Security Council on security in the Middle East.

6. **Ms. Khalaf** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), replying to the questions asked by the preceding speakers, said that the organizations of the United Nations system had been endeavouring for decades to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians under occupation. Such efforts were proving ineffectual. The only effective solution would be to end the occupation, which constituted an anomaly in the post-colonial world and violated international law and international decisions, including Security Council resolutions. The Israeli occupying authorities should be held accountable for what was happening in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Golan Heights. Yet many turned a blind eye to the illegal Israeli settlement activity. United Nations organizations, including ESCWA and all other relevant funds and agencies, would continue to try to reduce the hardships endured by the occupied populations.

7. **The Chair** invited the Committee to engage on a general discussion on the item.

8. **Mr. AlHantouli** (Observer for Palestine), said that the violations of international law and United Nations resolutions by the occupying Power, Israel, included killing of Palestinian civilians, arbitrary arrests, confiscation of land, destruction of property, demolition of homes and restrictions on the movement of people and goods. Those actions hindered the growth of the Palestinian economy and undermined its development.

9. Israel also persisted in its attempts to change the character, status and demographics of the Occupied Palestinian Territory through its construction of illegal settlement and of the apartheid annexation wall in flagrant violation of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. By so doing it had severely restricted the Palestinian people's access to national resources, and the resulting depletion and

degradation of water resources and land and air pollution would have long-term environmental and public health effects.

10. In the past year, the pace of construction of settlements and the level of Israeli military operations and of attacks on the Palestinian people by settlers had doubled. In their barbaric and brutal raids, settlers were looting crops, flooding agricultural lands and uprooting trees: since the start of 2011 more than 8,000 olive trees, the cultivation of which was part of the Palestinian cultural heritage and provided the livelihoods of 100,000 Palestinian families, had been destroyed.

11. The Palestinian Government, through its programme entitled "Palestine: Ending the occupation, Establishing the State" and in cooperation with donor countries, had stepped up support for the affected areas through building, repair and development projects and through relief, particularly in East Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley and the districts isolated by the annexation wall and the expansion of illegal settlements. The goal was to enable the population to withstand the Israeli scheme to displace the Palestinians from their homes and workplaces. The Government had also formed special ministerial committees to deal with water and natural resource issues and the preservation of the environment in the face of illegal Israeli policies and practices.

12. Many friendly countries provided support in several areas in order to help to improve the dire social, economic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people. According to recent United Nations, World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) reports, Israeli occupation was the only obstacle to Palestine's economic, social and institutional development. The international community as a whole must compel Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by international law, international treaties and the relevant United Nations resolutions, which had affirmed the right of the Palestinian people and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan to sovereignty over their natural resources.

13. **Mr. Al-Hamadi** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, said that the report prepared by ESCWA documented Israel's arbitrary and barbaric policies, which blatantly violated international law, international humanitarian law and numerous United Nations resolutions. Those policies affected Palestinian and Syrian citizens in every aspect of their lives, including sovereignty over their natural resources. The continuing occupation, the illegal construction of settlements and the inhumane blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip all contributed to a growing humanitarian crisis. Palestinians were denied access to water, basic social services, employment and markets. The movement of persons, aid and commercial goods was severely restricted by closures and checkpoints. Israel had continued to exploit natural resources and pollute the environment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. In particular, nuclear waste had been buried under Jabal al-Shaikh in the Syrian Golan.

14. In 2010, Israel had expropriated 8,407.5 dunams of land and destroyed a further 1,532 dunams in the West Bank in order to expand settlements. Homes in Jerusalem were being systematically demolished and excavations were taking place at holy sites, the objective being to change the demographic and legal situation. In the occupied Syrian Golan, illegal settlements were being constructed on agricultural land belonging to Syrians.

15. Despite the Advisory Opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice and acknowledged by the General Assembly in resolution ES-10/15, construction of the separation wall had continued. Some 87 per cent of the wall was located in the West Bank, including Jerusalem; its purpose was to deprive the Palestinians of sovereignty over their resources and allow Israel to benefit from them. Israel extracted 80 per cent of the estimated potential of Palestinian aquifers. In the occupied Syrian Golan, water was sold to Syrian farmers at exorbitant prices, land was confiscated and trees were uprooted. There was discrimination against Syrians in the issuance of building permits.

16. The resulting economic situation, unemployment and displacement of families were devastating. People in the occupied Palestinian territories were deprived of their basic rights owing to Israeli aggression and violence. The international community must compel Israel to respect its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law.

17. **Mr. Daoud** (Sudan) said that Israel continued to subject Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan to the most brutal forms of repression

and aggression. Israel imposed restrictions not only on the movement of people and goods, but also on the operations of aid agencies, thereby hindering the supply of aid to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Israeli closure policy had led to an increase in poverty, with economic and social life degraded further by land seizures, settlement building and construction of the separation wall. The latter had turned Palestine into one big prison, in violation of international law pursuant to the advisory opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice on 9 July 2004, and had divided the West Bank into dozens of isolated cantons.

18. Israel consumed 91 per cent of the West Bank's water resources, leaving the Palestinians with 9 per cent for their own needs. Those actions, together with Israel's seizure of agricultural land for settlement construction and its restrictions on imports and exports, had deprived the Palestinians of food security. Public health had also deteriorated owing to the lack of a regular fuel and electricity supply, curfews and travel restrictions.

19. Israel had continued to build settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan, whose annexation was illegal under international law. The Arab population of the Syrian Golan was subjected to land seizures, imprisonment, attacks on agricultural land and natural resources and the threat of land mines.

20. Israeli violations of international law and human rights had led to the collapse of Palestinian infrastructure and the deterioration of economic and social conditions. His delegation therefore called upon the international community to compel Israel to comply with resolutions of international legitimacy, withdraw immediately from the Arab territories occupied in 1967 and compensate the Palestinian and Syrian peoples for the damage they had sustained.

21. **Ms. Zalkaply** (Malaysia), noting that the Israeli occupation constrained the existence and functioning of Palestinian Authority institutions and thereby aggravated the economic and social hardships inflicted on the Palestinian population, and that for every Israeli fatality 19 Palestinians were killed, said that although mediation was the only means of providing a sustainable resolution to all conflicts and crises, patience and prudence must not result in paralysis. Regrettably, the international community was unable to ensure the exercise of the Palestinians' economic rights despite 180 resolutions adopted so far on Palestine by the General Assembly and the Security Council. The barriers to economic and social development in the Syrian Golan, which were the result of Israeli occupation, were also deplorable.

22. Malaysia supported the application of Palestine to become a full member of the United Nations. The relevant resolution should be based on a two-State solution reflecting the security concerns of both parties. It was to be hoped that a peaceful end to the crisis would lead to an immediate cessation of the suffering of the people of Palestine and the occupied Syrian Golan.

23. **Ms. Al Meaini** (United Arab Emirates) said that Israel's actions had resulted in the deterioration of infrastructure, agricultural land, sanitation and the environment. Owing to closures and restrictions, poverty was growing in the occupied Arab territories, and unemployment had reached the highest level since 2000. Israel's military aggression against the Gaza Strip between February 2009 and February 2010 had led to the death or injury of thousands of civilians, mostly women and children. The blockade imposed by Israel since 2007 had greatly aggravated the economic and humanitarian situation.

24. Israel continued its illegal policy of settlement expansion and its attempts to impose facts on the ground by constructing the illegal separation wall, building settlements on occupied Palestinian land and bulldozing agricultural land and wells. Its seizure of Palestinian property in East Jerusalem sought to alter the city's historic character and identity, in contravention of international law. Israel continued to occupy the Syrian Golan, confiscate land and natural resources, build settlements and follow a policy of discrimination and repression against the Arab population, all of which was designed to Judaize the region and change its Arab character.

25. Her Government affirmed its solidarity with the Palestinian Authority and its President, and supported the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to their natural resources and to establish an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital. In particular, it supported the Palestinian Authority in its efforts to gain international recognition for an independent Palestinian State with full membership in the United Nations, something that did not preclude the resumption of negotiations. His Government further affirmed Syria's right to recover the occupied Golan. It therefore called

upon the international community to put pressure on Israel to cease its policy of aggression; lift the blockade on Gaza immediately; withdraw fully from all occupied Arab territory, including the occupied Syrian Golan and the remaining Lebanese territory.

26. The Occupied Palestinian Territory was the foremost recipient of aid from the Emirates. She called on the international community to assist the Palestinian people in fulfilling its basic needs and reconstructing the infrastructure destroyed by Israel.

27. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the ESCWA report shed new light on the economic and social suffering of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and Syrian citizens in the occupied Golan, including the exploitation and squandering of their natural resources. The inhabitants of those areas were deprived of the most basic requirements for a decent life. They were therefore far from realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), whose importance had repeatedly been stressed at the general debate of the General Assembly by supporters of the terrorist entity.

28. The economic blockade of 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza had resulted in a severe shortage of the basic necessities of life, preventing reconstruction and halting the supply of humanitarian aid to Gaza. By imposing collective punishment on Gaza, Israel had shown its contempt for international public opinion.

29. Israel, the occupying Power since 1967, had applied its own laws in the occupied Syrian Golan, in violation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981), which had determined Israel's annexation of the Golan to be null and void. Israel had constructed and expanded settlements in the Golan, seized Syrian-owned land, imposed exorbitant prices, uprooted fruit-bearing trees, bulldozed agricultural land and damaged the environment by burying nuclear waste there. His Government had written to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly on 19 October 2010 (A/65/520) to draw attention to those violations.

30. Israel also drew water from Lake Masada in the occupied Syrian Golan and sold the bulk of it to settlements at reduced prices, causing an estimated $30 million in losses to the Syrian inhabitants for the year 2010. Such actions were part of Israeli policies designed to deprive the local population of natural resources, in contravention of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and Security Council resolution 465 (1980).

31. The Second Committee should send a clear message to the entire world that the occupation was a violation of all international norms and laws. His delegation rejected the position of certain States, which portrayed themselves as the defenders and guardians of human rights but, whenever a draft resolution on the topic was discussed, objected strongly to any mention of the suffering and human rights violations of those living under Israeli occupation. Although the General Assembly might be unable to enforce its resolutions on the Israeli occupation, that did not diminish their importance. States should not shirk their moral responsibility towards those living under foreign occupation and the United Nations should take all necessary measures to compel Israel to implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), put an end to the occupation and compensate the Palestinian and Syrian inhabitants for their losses.

32. **Ms. Hussein** (Maldives) stated that only through formal international recognition of the State of Palestine, living side by side and in peace with Israel, could social normalcy, legal equality, economic opportunity and sustainable development be achieved in the region. Despite Israel's disengagement from Gaza in 2005 and a slight easing of the blockade on the area in 2010, Gaza remained under a state of occupation, while movement and economic activities in the West Bank were subject to even stricter control.

33. The Maldives was concerned at the alarming rate of settlement expansion, which deprived Palestinians of access to water, land and energy. Moreover, land, water and air were being degraded and polluted, undermining the future sustainable development and welfare of the population. Gaza's sole water source was an aquifer that was contaminated with dangerous levels of various chemicals, while in the West Bank more than 300,000 people had to rely on cisterns to catch polluted rain water, or use tankers at an exorbitant cost. While the international community was vigilant in seeking to improve the social, economic and environmental conditions of all Palestinians, for the territory to move forward, the State of Palestine should have the primary responsibility for building its infrastructure and ensuring social harmony, security, economic opportunities, fiscal viability and the protection of the natural environment.

34. **Mr. Aloumi** (Kuwait) said that Israel's continued oppressive and inhumane infringements of the rights of the Palestinian people and usurpation of their economic and social resources reflected the declared policy of Israel as an entity above the law. Israel systematically pursued settlement schemes designed to Judaize Palestinian areas rich in natural resources by displacing their inhabitants and to alter the demography of Jerusalem. Such actions were a violation, inter alia, of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, while the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip was a violation of article 33 of that Convention and impeded the revival of its economy.

35. He called on the international community to continue to exert pressure on Israel in order to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and to establish a State of their own, with East Jerusalem as its capital. An end must be put to the Israeli occupation of all Arab lands seized in June 1967, including the Syrian Golan, and to the continued Israeli violations of the sovereignty of Lebanon.

36. **Mr. Hashim** (Saudi Arabia) said that the Arab-Israeli conflict had been exacerbated by Israel's persistence in seizing Palestinian land. Through the Arab Peace Initiative launched by Saudi Arabia in 2002, the Arab States had clearly stated their commitment to a just and comprehensive peace based on international law. However, that outcome could be realized only when Israel withdrew from all occupied territories, including the Syrian Golan and the occupied Lebanese territory.

37. In disregard of international opinion, Israel had continued its illegal settlement policy in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Settlements now surrounded most of the cities of the West Bank and controlled half of its water resources, making it difficult for the Palestinian Authority to work effectively. Most States, including permanent members of the Security Council, had expressed their opposition to settlement activities. That consensus should now be embodied in a clear collective position; Israel must understand that it was not exempt from the principles of international law.

38. Israel's separation wall was intended not for security purposes, but rather to consolidate Israel's hold over East Jerusalem, control water resources and increase the number of settlements. Security could be achieved only through respect for human rights and the rule of law.

39. The blockade had made the Gaza Strip into one large prison, preventing the population from exercising its rights or accessing resources and services. A generation of children was growing up under siege with the experience of devastation and international neglect. The Security Council must ensure that the blockade was lifted.

40. In view of Israel's obduracy and the stalling of the peace process, his Government called on all Member States to recognize the State of Palestine along the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and to grant it full membership in the United Nations.

41. **Mr. Al-Shanfari** (Oman) said that along with other Arab States and the international community, Oman had encouraged negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and the occupying Power, Israel, thus far without success. The international community had a responsibility to support the establishment of an independent Palestinian State along the borders of 4 June 1967 with full membership in the United Nations, as part and parcel of the Organization's commitment to upholding international peace and security.

42. Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, the Syrian Golan and the remaining Lebanese territories bred resentment and anger in the region. At a time when the United Nations was working to provide shelter, protect biodiversity, combat food insecurity and liberalize global trade, Israel was demolishing homes, uprooting trees, preventing farmers from reaching their land and imposing an economic blockade. Settlement activities were the most pressing challenge for the international community as it sought to confront Israel's obduracy. All Member States should take effective action to support the right of the Palestinian people to independence by promoting a permanent peace based on a fair partnership and equality between peoples.

43. **Mr. Alseedi** (Iraq) denounced the disastrous social and economic impact of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and the Syrian Golan, and the excessive use of force by the Israeli occupation forces, as documented in the report under discussion. Israel's policy of aggression against the inhabitants and the infrastructure had undermined

peace efforts which would have brought about justice and an improved management of the region's resources. By imposing an inhuman blockade on Palestinian territories and holding Palestinians hostage on their own land, the Israeli forces had outperformed all other occupation forces in history through their use of specialized technical methods to exterminate the defenceless Palestinian people, particularly children. He expressed the hope that an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict would materialize in the near future on the basis of international law and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council and in accordance with the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative for a just and comprehensive peace. He called for the peaceful coexistence of Israel and Palestine as two sovereign States enjoying security and democracy together on the basis of equality.

44. **Ms. Al-Hadid** (Jordan) said that as a result of the occupation, the appropriation of natural resources and the closures and blockade affecting the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Palestine's economy was one of the most dependent on foreign aid. Land seizures, the uprooting of trees and the destruction of property, together with collective punishment, blockades and closures, represented a blatant challenge to international agreements and United Nations resolutions.

45. Her delegation therefore called for the cessation of all measures aggravating the economic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinians in the Occupied Arab Territory, and urged the international community to continue to provide the necessary assistance to the Palestinian Authority and people. The Palestinian people had a right to self-determination, the establishment of an independent State and sovereignty over their territory and resources.

46. **Mr. Kurer** (Libya) said that the ESCWA report showed that Israel's recourse to killings, expulsions, blockades and arbitrary imprisonment against Palestinians had increased. The Israeli regime had no regard for international law and the United Nations was unable to enforce its resolutions aimed at ending the occupation and preventing the destruction of vital Palestinian infrastructure.

47. The occupying Power continued to murder, imprison and expel; to demolish homes, destroy residential areas and bulldoze fields; and to seize water resources, expropriate agricultural land and impose blockades and closures. The purpose of those actions, which caused economic, social and psychological damage in the occupied territories, was to starve the Palestinian people and to force them to relinquish their rights, including the right of return.

48. Israel had continued to tighten its grip on the Palestinian people. The separation wall broke the contiguity of Palestinian areas and prevented people from reaching their places of work. The separation of Palestinian land from water resources had impeded olive production and caused many farmers to leave their land. When completed, the wall would isolate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank and make access to everyday services more difficult, especially as the military occupation authorities had declared the areas between the wall and the Green Line to be closed.

49. Such policies had serious economic and social repercussions. The blockade had restricted transfers of cash from the West Bank to Gaza, halting private sector investment there. Repeated Israeli incursions in the border areas had caused serious damage to agricultural land and the water grid. The offshore area in which fishing was permitted had been reduced to only three miles. That had led to economic collapse, high levels of unemployment and widespread poverty. It was refugee women and children who bore the greatest burden; they suffered from malnutrition, disease and a lack of health care.

50. The occupation authorities continued to refuse to allow the Golan population expelled in 1967 to return. Settlements continued to be built in the Golan Heights, lands bulldozed, fruit-bearing trees owned by Syrian Arabs uprooted and the marketing of their produce obstructed. The occupation authorities also controlled water resources, thereby severely restricting the agricultural activity of Syrian inhabitants.

51. Affirming the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the right of return of the refugees, his delegation called upon the international community to shoulder its moral and historical responsibility to support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

52. **Ms. Irman** (Indonesia) said that the Note by the Secretary-General was an unpleasant reminder that a number of countries and territories were still unable to exercise their right to development because of foreign

occupation. The current meeting of the Second Committee, held against the backdrop of the Palestinian people's continuous suffering at the hands of the occupants of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, would be meaningless if it could not help the victims to tackle the problems that they faced. Indonesia supported the Palestinian people in their legitimate quest for the exercise of their inalienable rights to an independent and sovereign State, to development and to the use of their natural resources. Lastly, Indonesia firmly believed in a two-State solution as a firm basis of strategic importance for a peaceful and just regional architecture in the Middle East.

53. **Mr. Raidan** (Israel) said that the Second Committee, having capitulated to the demands of certain Member States whose sole mission was to disparage Israel, was regrettably again wasting time on an issue irrelevant to its mandate. The predictable conclusions of the Committee, which every year endorsed an inflammatory resolution condemning the State of Israel, would be biased and flawed. Many of the Member States that paid lip service to the Palestinians did nothing to improve life for the Palestinian people on the ground. In contrast, Israel had concretely shown its commitment to the progress of Palestinian society and to the development of the Palestinian economy and infrastructure. Refuting the misguided allegations directed at Israel would be easy but would not contribute to responsible professional discourse.

54. Every country that had used the Second Committee as a forum to bash Israel had benefited from Israel's contributions to the advancement of sustainable development and cooperation among States and knew that it prospered as a result of Israel's state-of-the-art innovations and technological know-how, which had been developed to deal with matters at the heart of the Committee's work and goals. As a small country with a shortage of natural resources, Israel had been compelled over the years to confront such problems as water scarcity and desertification by developing revolutionary agricultural techniques involving salt- and drought-resistant plant species; animal husbandry for extreme climates; advanced greenhouse, aquaculture, afforestation and land-reclamation technologies; and waste-water recycling systems. Those technologies were widely exported.

55. Israel shared the vital interests of its neighbours in protecting the natural environment. Cooperation would be greatly enhanced if the Palestinian Authority proceeded with the numerous projects that had already been approved in relevant meetings. Related fields of Israeli-Palestinian collaboration included the development of energy infrastructure and joint agricultural projects promoted by Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV). The wide range of existing Israeli-Palestinian cooperation in matters related to natural resources utterly contradicted the impressions conveyed in the current debate. The Palestinian Authority declined to participate in the programmes described and the sponsors of the resolution presented would rather ignore the real issues in order to advance their own narrow political agendas.

56. **Mr. AlHantouli** (Observer for Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the report and the various statements had clearly not been enough to get their message across to the representative of Israel. The Israeli occupiers did not want to acknowledge the facts. Instead, the Israeli delegation criticized the work of the Committee and tried to portray itself as the object of attacks. Israel was not being attacked, but should understand that the occupation must come to an end. Israeli technology had been developed at the expense of the resources of an entire people. The desert bloomed at the expense of the Bedouin population. Israeli technologies for exploiting scarce resources were in fact stealing Palestinian resources, including water. Palestine had opted for peace and negotiations. Negotiation with the occupying Power did not imply acceptance or legitimization of the status quo. The Palestinian Authority's cooperation in various domains in the interests of the Palestinian people should not be used to legitimize the occupation.

57. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the occupying Israeli entity was attempting to sow confusion regarding the work of the Committee and the facts contained in the report. Israel affected to reach out for peace and cooperation with the peoples of the world. In reality, it was responsible for the longest and most heinous occupation in modern times. It persistently violated the Fourth Geneva Convention, ignored the relevant United Nations resolutions and held itself to be above international law and the will of the international community. It was ludicrous for the representative of the occupying entity to describe the

theft of water and the destruction of natural resources as advanced technology.

58. Israel had submitted draft resolutions on such issues as agriculture at a time when its occupying forces were starving the Arab population, destroying their natural resources and depriving them of their most basic right to sustainable development. His delegation urged Member States to take note of Israel's attempt to cover up its crimes by exploiting development issues.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/66/SR.24

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Chair: Mr. Yohanna (Vice-Chair) ..... (Nigeria)

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In the absence of Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Mr. Yohanna (Nigeria), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 16: Information and communication technologies for development (A/66/64-E/2011/77, A/66/67-E/2011/79 and A/66/77-E/2011/103)

1. **Ms. Qian** (Director of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on Enhanced Cooperation on Public Policy Issues Pertaining to the Internet (A/66/77-E/2011/103), said that the results of the broad-based consultations had revealed that, while there was no agreement on what issues should be prioritized, a number of issues had been identified where cooperation would be helpful. They included cybercrime, freedom of information and management of critical internet resources. Moreover, but a few shared principles could be discerned, notably the principle that authority for Internet-related public policy issues was the sovereign right of States and that management of the Internet should continue to include civil society, the private sector, international organizations and the academic and technical communities.

2. **Mr. Hamdi** (Science, Technology and ICT Branch, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) at the regional and international levels (A/66/64-E/2011/77), said that the use of mobile telephones had expanded beyond all expectations. Mobile networks were currently accessible to 90 per cent of the world's population, including 75 per cent of those living in rural areas. Almost three quarters of mobile subscriptions were in developing countries, and new applications were constantly being developed. Concerns about the digital divide remained but the nature of the divide was changing. Concerns likewise persisted about privacy and security and there were several international initiatives under way to enable States to respond effectively to cyberthreats.

3. Given the improved level of connectivity, opportunities for bringing about development gains from information and communication technologies (ICTs) were expanding. Accordingly, when formulating development policies more attention should be paid to how ICTs were applied in the productive sectors. Also, more should be done to engage the private sector and to promote the use of ICTs by small and medium-sized enterprises in the developing world.

4. The WSIS Forum and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) were helping to broaden participation and promote dialogue and partnerships on Internet issues.

5. Speaking on behalf of Mr. Frederic Riehl, former Chair of the CSTD Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum, he introduced the report of the Working Group (A/66/67-E/2011/79) adding that, since the Working Group had not had sufficient time to formulate recommendations its mandate had been extended.

6. **Ms. Handrujovicz** (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that while ICTs held great potential for eradicating poverty and promoting inclusive growth and development, the promise of ICTs remained largely unfulfilled. The Group was concerned about the new dimensions that the digital divide had taken in terms of quality of access. Greater efforts were needed to bridge the gap in Internet access and broadband connectivity.

7. The Group attached great importance to the Internet Governance Forum, which had provided a useful framework for dialogue on public policy issues. It welcomed the extension of the Working Group's mandate and invited the Secretary-General to hold further consultations in order to enable Governments to carry out their responsibilities in respect of international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet.

8. ICTs were a powerful force for development and offered many opportunities to disadvantaged sectors. Accordingly, greater emphasis was needed on the transfer of such technologies to developing countries. The Group acknowledged the work being done in that regard by the various agencies and regional commissions.

9. In order for developing countries to benefit from ICTs, greater emphasis should be placed on reducing costs, including the cost of broadband connections, and on capacity-building.

10. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that despite increasing Internet use worldwide, the least developed

countries were finding it increasingly difficult to make such technologies available to their people and were being increasingly marginalized. The international community should make every effort to reduce that digital divide. The Group stressed the need to implement the Plan of Action adopted by the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society, the Tunis Commitment, and the 2005 Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

11. The Group was fully committed to building a modern ICT infrastructure and promoting Internet access through mobile broadband and satellite connections and it called upon development partners to provide enhanced support for ICT infrastructure development, to facilitate the transfer of relevant skills and to actively support private sector development to that end. The United Nations should remain at the forefront of efforts to enhance access to ICTs, inter alia, through the Internet Governance Forum.

12. **Mr. Khan** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) said that it was incumbent on all to harness the full potential of information and communications technologies. Progress was being made in disseminating mobile connectivity, but narrowing the digital divide particularly in areas such as mobile broadband connectivity and cloud computing remained a challenge. It was important to integrate ICT into national and regional development programmes, to enhance international efforts to provide affordable access to ICT and to increase investment in ICT. The members of ASEAN believed that it was vital to continue working together through regional and international cooperation as well as through public-private partnerships to develop the ICT sector.

13. Well over 11 million people in ASEAN countries were currently employed in the ICT industry. Moreover, 2011 had seen the adoption of an ICT master plan which was designed to establish ICT as an engine of growth for ASEAN member States and to transform the region into a global ICT hub. ASEAN was grateful for the work being done by various United Nations agencies and ESCAP to promote the use of ICT and it supported the efforts of the Secretary-General to promote consultations among Governments and all stakeholders on Internet-related public policy matters.

14. **Ms. Haynes** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that many CARICOM States had formulated national ICT strategies and, in 2005, a regional ICT steering committee had been established. It had developed a regional digital development strategy (RDDS), which was designed to foster a culture of innovation and quality, and to help business and Governments use ICT for sustainable growth and to support development. Currently CARICOM member States, like other developing countries, had very limited broadband network coverage prompting concern that a new digital divide based on the quality of access to ICT resources might arise.

15. Growth in the use of ICT for development depended on collaboration with the private sector and civil society and on North-South and South-South cooperation. CARICOM States had received substantial support from international development partners including the European Union and the Government of Spain and they looked forward to continued support from the United Nations system. They welcomed the recent decision to extend the mandate of the Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum.

16. **Mr. Ong** Sze Wang (Singapore) said that ICT could aid development in many ways, including by reducing the costs of trade transactions and increasing their speed. As a trading hub, Singapore realized the value of ICT and had been among the first to adopt paperless trade and documentation systems. It welcomed the initiative to form a community of United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade (UNNExT) in the Asia-Pacific region.

17. Recent ICT advances in the social field had been revolutionary. With the launch in 2010 of the first websites using domain names in non-Latin languages, the way was open for billions of non-English speakers to access the Internet.

18. Singapore was also focused on building a strong e-government; a wide variety of public services ranging from filing taxes to obtaining business licences were being provided through ICT. Innovations were constantly being made to keep pace with ICT developments. In environmental protection, ICT research should make energy efficiency a high priority

for all new products and systems, as Singapore's Green Information Technology initiative sought to do.

19. Investment in infrastructure was but one of the two components needed to realize the potential of ICT for development, the other being investment in manpower. Singapore's new manpower development road map would focus on developing ICT experts and on education in emerging areas such as Green Information Technologies and cloud computing.

20. Singapore believed in sharing its experience with other developing countries and was currently sharing experiences in such areas as environmental protection, education and ICT. Since 1992, it had organized training courses for more than 75,000 officials from 170 countries.

21. **Mr. Farias** (Brazil) said that ICT must be a tool in the service of development. Brazil was improving its e-government tools and spreading the use of interoperable standards. The international community must focus on the digital divide, both within countries and between developed and developing nations, and address the lack of effective financial mechanisms to back ICT development. Policies should be implemented so that all Member States could benefit from the new potentialities of instant networking. More investment in broadband infrastructure and innovative services was needed in order to generate new jobs and incomes.

22. The Internet had evolved into a global facility. Consequently, its governance should be multilateral and democratic. Brazil had welcomed the decision, in 2010, to renew the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). IGF should focus on policy dialogue and create mechanisms to ensure greater participation of stakeholders from developing countries. It should also produce clear outputs, such as a concise document indicating convergent as well as diverse ideas expressed in relation to each of the topics addressed by IGF.

23. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh) welcomed the extension of the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum; he believed that the Forum would help improve the socio-economic conditions of millions.

24. He stressed the need for transfer of technology, especially information technology to the developing world at an affordable cost. Unfortunately, little had been done and thus far to transfer technology and the least developed countries in particular had little, if any, cutting-edge technology. The private sector was crucial, as most state-of-the-art technology belonged to the private sector. Member States should immediately address the issue within the ambit of the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.

25. **Mr. Xie** Xiaowu (People's Republic of China) said that the information and communication industry had become a basic sector of China's economy, with more than 1 billion telephone users and 142 million broadband users. Internet access had been upgraded to a high-speed network and China would speed up its efforts to develop infrastructures for a new-generation information network to promote development of ICTs, pushing for development of mobile Internet, e-government, e-business and communications in rural areas, accelerating the ICT application process in urban communities and leveraging ICT to realize green industrial development.

26. States had the sovereign right to make decisions on Internet issues and the right and responsibility to deal with international public policy issues related to the Internet. The United Nations should play an active role in Internet governance. In keeping with the principles of the World Summit on the Information Society, efforts were needed to increase developing country involvement so that all countries could participate on an equal footing in managing Internet resources. It was necessary to further promote multilingualism in domain names and diversity of network culture, and to strengthen Internet security through international cooperation.

27. The United Nations should play an increasingly important role in promoting development through ICT. Every State and every citizen was entitled to an information society that benefited all and was duty-bound to join in the effort to build such a society.

28. **Mr. Borg** (Malta) said that Malta's economic development depended on providing its citizens affordable ICTs; Malta was doing that through various programmes, that provided subsidized Internet rates, refurbished computers, free Wi-Fi Internet access and training in basic IT skills. Malta was exploring ways to deploy the next-generation broadband network nationwide as soon as possible. Within the European Union, Malta was seeking to achieve a single digital market through the Digital Agenda for Europe.

29. The Government, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Secretariat, had set up the COMNET Foundation for ICT Development, to promote ICT cooperation among members of the Commonwealth. Malta had been leading a Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum and was currently working on a cybercrime initiative to help developing countries achieve the requisite technical and human capacity to combat cybercrime. The Foundation's portfolio on ICT development was also being placed at the disposal of developing countries.

30. Malta supported Internet governance capacity-building through its relationship with DiploFoundation, a non-profit organization, which worked to promote the participation of stakeholders, particularly from developing countries, in the Internet governance and ICT policy debate. In small developing countries, DiploFoundation had trained the first generation of Internet governance policymakers. Malta had also supported DiploFoundation in the development and implementation of different e-participation methods. E-participation increased the inclusiveness of global Internet policy processes by strengthening the voices of developing countries and local communities worldwide.

31. **Mr. Singh** (India) said that it was becoming increasingly evident that, as a rapidly evolving medium, the Internet required timely global solutions, not divergent national policies. Recognizing the need for enhanced cooperation and being firmly committed to the multi-stakeholder approach, his delegation wished to propose the establishment of a new institutional mechanism, to be called the United Nations Committee for Internet-Related Policies (CIRP), in order to ensure that the Internet was governed in a democratic and participatory manner. It would be mandated to:

(i) Develop international public policies with a view to ensuring coordination of Internet-related global issues;

(ii) Coordinate the bodies responsible for technical functioning of the Internet, including global standards setting;

(iii) Facilitate negotiation of treaties, and agreements on Internet-related public policies;

(iv) Address developmental issues related to the Internet;

(v) Promote civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, including the right to development;

(vi) Undertake arbitration and dispute resolution where necessary; and

(vii) See to crisis management in relation to the Internet.

32. The Committee would comprise 50 Member States chosen on the basis of equitable geographical representation and would meet annually for two weeks. To ensure participation of all relevant stakeholders, it would establish four advisory groups, one each for civil society, the private sector, intergovernmental and international organizations, and the technical and academic community. It would receive inputs from the Internet Governance Forum and it would report directly to the General Assembly.

33. His delegation called for the establishment of an open-ended working group under the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to draw up the detailed terms of reference with a view to setting CIRP up within 18 months.

34. **Mr. Lakhal** (Tunisia) said that ICTs had become essential for developing countries' participation in the world economy. Not only could they do much to eradicate poverty, promote development and close the widening gap between developed and developing countries, but the Tunisian revolution had shown that, if used properly to propagate the ideals of democracy and justice for all, ICTs could also be a powerful means of enfranchising peoples. Using the Internet, cell phones and social media, educated young Tunisians had managed to overthrow a 23-year-old dictatorship and to communicate their legitimate aspirations to the whole world. They had then organized throughout the country to rebel against years of injustice.

35. As noted in the Secretary-General's report, the digital divide had changed from a quantitative divide to a disparity in quality and capacity, the cost of broadband Internet service being inversely proportional to the level of development. Change was thus occurring at two speeds, in both economic and technological terms, inasmuch as ICTs reflected the state of the world.

36. It was necessary to foster conditions for the establishment of a global digital partnership based on

solidarity and emphasizing the transfer of ICTs to — and their dissemination in — developing countries. The United Nations should monitor progress in the transfer of technology and pay special attention to reductions in costs — including the cost of broadband connections — and building capacity.

37. **Mr. Emozozo** (Nigeria) said that while the total number of Internet users continued to grow, there was still a marked difference between Europe, where 65 per cent of the population was estimated to be online by the end of 2010 and sub-Saharan Africa, with only 9.6 per cent. It was therefore imperative to exert further efforts to enhance Internet use and security.

38. In 2001, Nigeria had experienced a telecommunications boom with the arrival of the Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM): growth in the sector had been sustained and Nigeria currently had 83 million active GSM lines.

39. Broadband access was growing faster in developed countries, raising concerns about a new digital divide based on quality of access. Nigeria therefore called for innovative approaches to promote universal access to broadband infrastructure.

40. In order for developing countries to benefit from ICTs, greater emphasis should be placed on reducing the cost of such technologies, including the cost of broadband connectivity, and on capacity-building.

41. Regarding effective surveillance and regulation, he said that the Internet Governance Forum had proven to be very useful in providing a framework for open dialogue on public policy issues relating to the Internet. It would benefit from greater participation by developing countries.

42. **Mr. Al-Kooheiji** (Bahrain) said that Bahrain's national strategies focused on using ICT for development in all its aspects, encompassing a range of sectors. The "Schools of the Future" project was designed to use state-of-the-art technology in education. The Ministry of Health used IT for preventive health programmes, delivery of primary care services and the development of health facility networks and public health facilities.

43. In 2011, Bahrain's e-Government authority had received the Global FutureGov Award, a leadership award from the Middle East Excellence Awards Institute and an award from the 12th Bled Forum on Europe. Use of e-services in 2010 had been 47 per cent for individuals, 85 per cent for the business sector and 92 per cent for the public sector. The Government had launched a national capacity-building programme to close the digital divide.

44. **Mr. Holtz** (United Kingdom) said that, given the general agreement regarding the need to assess how the Internet should be governed and regulated, his delegation had welcomed the General Assembly's renewal of the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

45. It hoped that the appointments of the IGF Chair and Executive Coordinator would be confirmed as soon as possible. It was vital that the IGF Secretariat, supported by the Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group, maintain its independence by ensuring that funding was provided on a voluntary basis by all interested stakeholders. That was crucial in order to ensure that the IGF agenda reflected the interests of all stakeholders, including those who did not ordinarily have a voice in United Nations multilateral forums.

46. The forthcoming London Conference on Cyberspace would bring together Governments from over 65 countries, international organizations and senior representatives of global business and civil society. People from around the world would be able to engage in the debate, as the event would be streamed online.

47. A globally networked world offered enormous economic and social opportunities. The Internet's capacity to increase prosperity and to empower individuals and societies was unparalleled in modern history. At the same time, the Internet provided opportunities for cybercrime; Governments could use technological advances to violate citizens' rights and prevent access to information and there was also a risk of misunderstandings arising between States, leading to increasing tensions in international relations. All of those issues would be addressed at the London Conference. Hopefully, the agenda set in London would allow the world to enjoy the full benefits of a safe and secure cyberspace for generations to come.

48. **Ms. Mammadova** (Azerbaijan), noting that ICTs opened vast opportunities for interaction and collaboration across societies, said that the ICT sector accounted for an important share of her country's rapidly growing economy. Her Government's "open door" policy had facilitated the country's integration

into the world economy, and had also played an important role in attracting capital.

49. Her delegation stressed the positive developments achieved within the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (UN SPECA) in promoting knowledge-based economies and innovation. Azerbaijan valued the UN SPECA cooperation framework and would shortly be hosting the fourth session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Knowledge-based economies. It looked forward to hosting the IGF in 2012.

50. Azerbaijan remained a proponent of regional connectivity. In 2008, it had put forward the Trans-Eurasian Information Superhighway initiative (TEISH) aimed at creating a transnational fibre-optic backbone via a major new transit route: from Frankfurt to Hong Kong. That route would connect the biggest exchange points in Europe and Asia. In the second stage TEISH would provide affordable connectivity to landlocked countries in Eurasia, particularly Central Asia, allowing the project to become commercially viable and address the rapidly growing market of IP transit. Reporting on progress made, she said that Azerbaijan had recently hosted the first international workshop on TEISH with the participation of leading telecom operators from Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkey. A Project Secretariat had been established and the operators were working towards the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding.

51. **Mr. Šćepanović** (Montenegro) said that one of his Government's priorities was to promote social and cultural cohesion and encourage economic integration by fostering the information society. It had already adopted several laws on information security, electronic trade and other matters, and had taken various steps towards improving the network infrastructure, particularly the local digital telephone network. Currently, Montenegro had the highest penetration rate of mobile telephone users in the region and among European Union members.

52. Montenegro's strategy for development of the information society consisted of two parts, one dealing with electronic communication, the other with broadband. A significant number of projects had been completed relating *inter alia* to development of ICT infrastructure and education of human resources. Special attention had been given to increasing ICT training in primary and secondary schools, inter alia by increasing the number of PCs available to students.

53. Montenegro remained committed to the development of a modern and democratic society and to using the opportunities of ICTs to that end.

54. **Mr. Ringborg** (Sweden) said that as the Internet continued to grow, the international community must find the right balance of governance structures that would take full account of all stakeholders around the world. Full multi-stakeholder participation in the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) must include the private sector and civil society. Sweden was pleased that the mandate of the IGF had been extended.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.